

Azad Memorial Lectures, 1970

**SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Azad Memorial Lectures

Instituted in 1958 by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations as a mark of honour to the memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, scholar, statesman and founder-President of the Council, the Azad Memorial Lectures are intended to contribute to the promotion of better understanding among different peoples of the world. Eminent scholars from India and abroad are invited every year to speak on subjects of fundamental importance to humanity at large and in particular to the people of India.

Survival Depends on Higher Education

LORD BUTLER
of Saffron Walden

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

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Speech

BY DR. J. N. KHOSLA

President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Lord Butler, Dr. Rao, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I HAVE VERY great pleasure in welcoming you all to the Azad Memorial Lecture for 1970 that Lord Butler has kindly agreed to deliver this evening. As you know, these lectures were instituted by the Council to honour the memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was the first Education Minister of independent India and also the first President of this Council. Maulana Azad was essentially a scholar who had been dragged into politics by the force of circumstances. He firmly believed that knowledge can never be divided on the basis of race, region or period and it is only through the contribution of all peoples of all times and from all parts of the world that the noble edifice of human knowledge has been and will continue to be built. Maulana Azad, a great national leader and a man of vision, was fully aware of the importance of education in the task of consolidating the benefits of freedom and of building a new India. His conception of India was of a country 'where all religions, all communities and all sections of

opinion would find their proper place and work harmoniously in creating new conditions in which the individual would find an opportunity of growth, development and fulfilment.'

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations owes much to the initiative and guidance of Maulana Azad and embodies some of his aspirations. The Council recognises the fact that its main objective of promoting mutual understanding and closer cultural ties amongst the peoples of the world is closely bound up with the spread of the right type of education. Education in its widest sense is the foundation as well as the vehicle for all human development and the importance of proper education for the people both in developing and developed countries therefore cannot be exaggerated. As such we are very happy that Lord Butler has chosen to address us on the subject of higher education.

The Council has been very fortunate in the lecturers who have spoken in this series since 1959 when the late Jawaharlal Nehru delivered the inaugural lectures. Shri Nehru was followed amongst others, by two eminent British citizens, one was Lord Attlee, a highly respected elder statesman, and the other Dr. Arnold Toynbee, a distinguished historian. It is a matter of gratification for us that in Lord Butler we have a distinguished educationist and statesman from Britain to address us this evening in this lecture series.

The Council is deeply grateful to Dr. V.K. R.V. Rao for accepting our invitation to preside this evening. Dr. Rao occupies with distinction the Chair which was earlier occupied by Maulana Azad as Minister of Education and is himself a scholar and an educationist of international repute. His deep interest and involvement in education makes it all the more appropriate that he should take the Chair this evening.

As I have already said, Lord Butler has chosen a subject of great interest and importance to us all. I, therefore, now request Dr. Rao to introduce the distinguished speaker.

Speech

BY DR. V.K.R.V. RAO

Minister of Education and Youth Services

Lord Butler, Dr. Khosla, Ladies & Gentlemen:

I THINK Dr. Khosla has been a little premature in thanking me for presiding over this meeting. I was telling Lord Butler as we walked into the hall that it is possible I have to rush back to Parliament because I am told that there is going to be voting after the Prime Minister finishes her reply to the general budget debate. So I think he should not have given me his thanks because it makes me feel even more guilty than I felt when I had to make excuses to Lord Butler. I am extremely happy, however, to have the opportunity as Education Minister to welcome Lord Butler to this country and to this Azad Memorial Lecture. Lord Butler himself was also Minister of Education among the many posts that he occupied in the British Cabinet, during his long and very illustrious political career. Lord Butler as you know, is a person who is associated very much with India. I dare not claim him as an Indian citizen, but he has had long associations with this country and it is kind of him to have accepted the invitation to deliver the Azad Memo-

rial Lecture, 1970. We all know that the reform in education which took place during this century in U.K. was the result of the initiative and deep thinking of Lord Butler when he was President of the Board of Education. The educational reforms that he initiated are I think rather unusual in a conservative country like England where they are known as the Butler Reforms rather than as educational reforms which I think is itself the greatest tribute that the British nation can pay to a person who has rendered it such distinguished service.

I do not want to make any introductory remarks nor do I want to take this opportunity of making the concluding remarks which I would have made had I sat here till the end of the lecture. But I should like to say only one thing, the subject he has selected is of deep interest to us in this country today. In fact I think his lecture is going to serve as a great morale booster to all of us who have interest in higher education. In recent times higher education in our country has been under criticism because of the large number of educated unemployed who are presenting the country with one of its most difficult social and economic problems. And there are people who have been wondering whether the higher education, on which we are spending so much money in this country and in which we have made such vast quantitative progress in the last twenty years, is really worth

all the trouble we are taking because they say we are producing people whom we are not able to fit in to the social and economic structure in the country. I do not want to anticipate what Lord Butler is going to say, but I think what he will say will give us all who are in one way or another connected with higher education in this country a renewal of faith in higher education and also some guide lines as to what we should do in the realm of higher education.

The society is progressing at such an accelerating pace that without higher education I think it is impossible to run the affairs of the society. From the purely technological point of view higher education has become a must as far as the ordering of modern society is concerned and we therefore cannot escape the claims of higher education for survival. But what I am hoping Lord Butler may also touch upon in his lecture is not only the technological imperative of higher education for national survival but something about the moral imperative of higher education as well. How far and in what manner we can combine in higher education its scientific and technological content with a faith in man, with a faith in the dignity of man and the goodness of man, so that all of us who get the benefit of higher education will not only serve our society by being good managers, by being good administrators and good technicians and what not but will also help to serve our society in

making it a good society, a decent society, a wealthier and if I may express my own personal view in addition to all this, a democratic socialist society.

Survival Depends on Higher Education

I FEEL HONOURED to be asked to address your Council for Cultural Relations. I do this in honour of the memory of Maulana Azad. I had not the pleasure of a personal relationship with him as I had with Pandit N'ehru, but I had a high personal regard. I feel that he would have been satisfied that I had chosen the subject of Higher Education in which he was so interested. I find this subject particularly important since I believe that no modern country can solve its problems without investment primarily *not* in guns, *not* in butter and *not* in heavy-industrial ventures but in Education.

In order to be controversial at the opening I would like to state that your country and any country would be wise to allow the Education Budget to be level with even the Defence Budget. When I have worked through my talk you will see what I mean.

I was tempted to choose another subject—namely to follow up the first Nehru Memorial Lecture which I delivered at Cambridge, by

talking on the first stages of India's Independence. But I felt that I had said all I could in the Nehru Lecture. I feel that Higher Education is so important to Developed or Developing countries that I am very much at home with my theme. After all I left politics for education and I do not regret this. Of course I cannot lose interest in politics but I gain interest in education. I am Chancellor of two universities, Sheffield and Essex. I was Rector of Glasgow and I am Master of a fine college with special responsibilities.

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By choosing Higher Education I do not mean to neglect the primary, secondary or other ranges. I am aware that you in your far flung battle against illiteracy must attach special importance to the primary range—but in Britain we are engaged in a readjustment of secondary education which I made free for all in 1944. Now the idea is to be comprehensive and not selective. I could speak for hours on this subject, but I still believe that Higher Education presents the greatest challenge from the point of view of national survival. There are some rather interesting statistics about the switch in expenditure within Education in Britain.

As a share of the gross national product educational expenditure has risen from 2.5% between the wars, to 3.2% in the mid-fifties and over 5% in the mid-sixties. As a share of public

expenditure it has moved from 13.8% between the wars to 18% or 20% in the late sixties. Look at this figure: Primary Education took 42.8% in 1920 and only 21.5% in 1965.

From the point of view of this lecture the proportion of total current expenditure going to Higher Education switched from 4.7% to 11.4% between 1948 and 1965. This will be increased by the amount granted by Local Education Authorities to the Technical Colleges and Polytechnics. We are at the beginning of a great surge forward in Higher Education. So, judging from your Commission's report on Education, are you. But I cannot stress enough the importance of this move. For developing even more than for developed countries, knowledge and knowhow is the key to the better life not as an alternative investment in financial projects, but as a priority.

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You will therefore see that I have no reason to apologise for choosing my subject. When I became Minister of Education in 1941, with the bombs raining on London, Winston Churchill asked me if I wished to confine my activities to smacking the children and evacuating them from one place to another. He reminded me that Campbell Bannerman when Prime Minister had offered him the post. But he had replied that he was no good at smacking children. I told him that I intended to reform the law relating to

education. I did so and here I am, still unrepentant that through Education lies your and our salvation.

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You must excuse me if many of my examples and quotations come from the West. But I was born in India and I would like to commend the report of your own Commission on Education. I would like in particular to quote Pandit Nehru's description of a university. My object will be to show that a big change is wanted in the attitude of our universities and higher education centres to modern life and technological life as we know and see it. I shall try to describe what I mean in all branches today. I shall leave till later the examination of more particular aspects, taking Student Power the world over, then such experiments as the Open University, the Independent University, Adult Education, and so forth, concluding with an appeal for university autonomy and academic liberty.

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Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru spoke as follows about a university:

“ ‘A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people.’ These great words highlight the basic truth that universities have a crucial part to play in the life, welfare and strength of a nation. They

can, however, fill this role only if they owe uncompromising loyalty to certain fundamental values of life. They are essentially a community of teachers and students where, in some way, all learn from one another or, at any rate, strive to do so. Their principal object is to deepen man's understanding of the Universe and of himself—in body, mind and spirit, to disseminate this understanding throughout society and to apply it in the service of mankind. They are the dwelling places of ideas and idealism, and expect high standards of conduct and integrity from all their members. Theirs is the pursuit of truth and excellence in all its diversity, a pursuit which needs, above all, courage and fearlessness. Great universities and timid people go ill together."

I want to discuss with you the responsibilities which face education authorities in the complex area of higher education. It is in this area that Disraeli's dictum, "upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends," seems more valid than ever. At the same time the responsibilities are becoming increasingly complex and arduous; there is the problem of greater and greater numbers wanting the benefits of higher education; there is the dual problem of trying to maintain control over increasingly complex and numerous technical details, and maintaining the human element in an increasingly impersonal society. When I introduced the Education Act in my country in 1944 we saw a need to find a compromise between the greatly expanding role of the state, and the freedom and diversity and equality of opportunity which are necessary ingredients in any educational system. No government legis-

lation can be a panacea for all our ills, but it is recognised now that without the intervention of the State educators will simply not be able to live up to their responsibilities. But we must decide that the State must go only as far as help and must not interfere with university autonomy. This concept is described on p. 326 of your Education Commission's Report.

It will be my constant theme that while academic life must be free, it cannot be sealed off from professional life as it was in the last century, nor student from professor, that industry and the professions and universities have a lot of problems in common and that they all must be taken together in any quest for a solution. Those who are responsible for education, who wield an enormous amount of money, take decisions which not only affect children at school and students at university, but very much affect business and industry and the professions as well. When the State allocates funds to Higher Education, it must also ensure that there are going to be jobs available for these graduates when they embark upon a career. It is no good subsidising a student for a career in a particular profession if there is not going to be a job available for that student in his chosen career. No one can afford to have a graduate proletariat, an unemployed pool of labour among those with high qualifications, any more than it can afford not to have graduate students in parts of

industry where they are badly needed. There is now a constant oscillation between the development of the individual and the production of Plato's right minded citizen, who would do the task for which he was deemed by the state to be most adapted. Plato spoke as follows:

“Education takes the play-tendencies of childhood and directs and constrains them until the growing child takes on the mould of the rational, co-operative self-determining citizen.... Their immature minds are to be directly conditioned, from the very first, to take on the dyes of the community laws, so that this shall be indelible.”

I quoted this with disapproval in my essay on liberty at Witwatersrand University in April last. I was much heartened to note the way in which the students were rebelling and indeed risking arrest to prove how wrong their government was to close their Open Universities to Africans and others. The aim of a university in a proper society should be to oppose the State tincturing the students so that they worship the state. A university education must not only be free it must give the students a purpose in life.

University education in the 19th century was a means of acquiring wisdom and satisfying curiosity, but it was not an instrument for the resolution of social ideals, there was no urgent need then to put scholarship to any practical use; that this was done on a large scale was the result of dedication by individuals. Universities acquired a lofty stability and a peaceful outlook

on the world; they developed their own mode of government and were managed by their own members. The funds provided by the Government were very limited, for technological growth could be absorbed without a prolonged and fundamental academic training. There was attachment to the past; a classical education was considered a virtue where it is now deemed to be an outdated value. It has been said of a classical education that it teaches one to ignore the rewards which it renders one incapable of earning. In short, universities were regarded as something unique and scholarship very often an end in itself.

Universities must not remain in their own ivory towers being out of tune with an age where specialisation is being forced on us, whether we like it or not. The Harvard Committee pointed out as long ago as 1945 that, "The opposition to general education does not stem from causes located in the past alone. We are living in an age of 'specialism' in which the avenue to success for the student often lies in his choice of a specialised career, whether as a teacher, a chemist, or an engineer, or a doctor, or a specialist in some form of business or of manual or technical work....Specialism is the means for advancement in our own mobile social structure; yet we must envisage the fact that a society controlled wholly by specialists is not a wisely ordered society. We cannot,

however, turn away from specialisation and this is specially important in providing specialist courses for teachers since so many of your graduates, as with us, go into teaching. The problem is how to save general education and its values within a system where specialisation is necessary”.

C.P. Snow commented on the very high percentage of scientists and engineers he had come across to whom reading or literature meant almost nothing.¹ Inversely, Sir Eric Ashby is right when he says, “The path to culture should be through a man’s specialism, not by-passing it....the *sine qua non* for a man who desires to be cultured is a deep and enduring enthusiasm to do one thing excellently....A student who can weave his technology into the fabric of society can claim to have a liberal education; a student who cannot weave his technology into the fabric of society cannot claim even to be a good technologist.”²

It may be profitable at this stage to compare notes as between various countries as to the proportion of the age groups involved in obtaining higher diplomas at universities or similar institutions of further education. If we take the figures published in the Robbins Committee

¹ Rede Lecture, 1959, Cambridge, later published as *Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*.

² Sir Eric Ashby, *Technology and the Academics*, pp. 84-85.

Report on Higher Education and compare them with the Poignant Report it would appear that the figures for Great Britain are something like 9.8 %, for France 5 %, for Germany and Holland 4 %, for the USA 17 % and for the Soviet Union between 7 and 12 %.

Mr. David Ovens in his study on Investment in Human Capital in the Fourth Indian Plan, puts the figures for India at 2.4 % of the relevant age group.³ What is apparent is that the United States is far ahead of all of us whether we are what is described as Developing or Developed countries. However we are contemplating almost double our numbers in Higher Education by 1980.

The Commission on India's Education in paragraph 16.13 on p. 393 says, "By the end of the century the per capita Indian expenditure on education and research on the most optimistic projections may go up to Rs. 200 per year (at constant prices), this could be as high as 10 % of the per capita GNP at that time. The equivalent figure for the USA would be Rs. 10,000 per capita." The report goes on, "The moral for us (that is India) is plain. In the utilisation of our scientific manpower we must strive our utmost to achieve high efficiency—higher even than that of the industrially developed countries, if

³ David Ovens: "Investment in Human Capital in the Fourth Indian Plan".

we can". (16.14, p. 396).

I therefore record with mixed feelings the following reservation about science in the massive report of your Commission:

"If science is to be pursued with full vigour and zest and is to become a mighty force in the Indian renaissance, it must derive its 'nourishment' from our cultural and spiritual heritage and not bypass it. Science must become an integral part of our cultural fabric....

"All is not well with the way science has developed in the western world (or rather the 'northern world'). There are people who are seriously perturbed by the imbalance between the growth of science and awareness of the true interests and welfare of mankind as a whole. Knowledge and wisdom, power and compassion, are out of balance. The late Max Born, one of the greatest physicists of our time has given expression to these fears and doubts thus: 'Though I love science I have the feeling that it is so much against history and tradition that it cannot be absorbed by our civilisation. The political and military horrors and the complete breakdown of ethics which I have witnessed during my life may be not a symptom of an ephemeral social weakness, but a necessary consequence of the rise of science—which in itself is one of the highest intellectual achievements of man. If this is so, there will be an end to man as a free, responsible being. Should the race not be extinguished by a nuclear war it will degenerate into a flock of stupid, dumb creatures under the tyranny of dictators who rule them with the help of machines and electronic computers.'"⁴

I think this is too pessimistic a viewpoint. Surely a development of scientific and technological education is vital for India as for other countries. Above all let Indian culture control

⁴ India, Ministry of Education: *Report of the Education Commission*, 1964-66. New Delhi, 1966.

the extreme inhumanities of science and let Indian education serve the country.

I quote Dr. Rao, your Education Minister, who wrote in his book on "Education and Human Resources Development"⁵: 'It is true that education is a value in itself but confronted with the imperative demand for acceleration of economic development and therefore of trained manpower personnel....all educational programmes for which resources are required should be submitted to the test of relevance of the skills and training they impart to the development requirements of the country'.⁶ I discussed this with my and your friend Professor Lionel Elvin, who commented: 99% true but not quite 100%. By that he meant that if we are too utilitarian about education it loses its savour.

Dr. Rao goes on later, 'Expenditure on education constitutes an important form of investment in economic development. Investment criteria are therefore quite relevant in determining the volume and content of education. Skills and attitudes pertinent to the promotion of economic development constitute a necessary, though not exclusive, end product of education; and not only the content but also the methodo-

⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁶ V. K. R. V. Rao: *Education and Human Resources Development*, Bombay, Allied, 1966.

logy and the technology of education have to be formulated for the achievement of this objective. Within the educational system, priority has to be assigned to its different sectors, depending upon the stage of the country's development, and its manpower and attitudinal requirements. The development of human resources is the cardinal objective of education in a developing economy.'

This idea that to invest in education is to increase the country's prosperity is not new. Alfred Marshall, the great economist, regarded education as a "national investment." Like your Minister, Dr. Rao, he repudiated the possibility of calculating exact returns. John Stuart Mill, Malthus and Adam Smith took the same attitude towards education. Theodore Schultz writes as quoted in Gunnar Myrdal's *Asian Drama*, 'When poor countries enter upon the process of developing a modern agriculture and industry, with some notable exceptions, they invest too little in human capital relative to what they invest in non-human capital; skills and knowledge useful in their economic endeavour are neglected as they concentrate on new plants and equipment. Thus an unbalance arises and they fail often by a wide margin to attain their optimum rate of economic growth.'

In his book on *Underdevelopment and Edu-*

⁷ Gunnar Myrdal: *Asian Drama*, London, Allen Lane, 1968.

cational Policy, M.R.C. Mukherjee writes: "India should move by gradual stages so that she within the near future can invest 4-5 per cent of her Gross National Product entirely in education by 1980, provided her rate of economic growth can afford it. The educational development programme must be extended to all branches of education from primary to university including adult education. A comprehensive educational planning of this kind must be integrated with the overall five-year plans and be completed in time."⁸

He goes on to cite United Nations reports on the Problems of Social Development Planning to the effect that education, besides being the legitimate right of the people and a never-ending source of personal satisfaction to the individual citizen, is also an important factor directly contributing to the economic development of the country. If education at all levels were systematically planned and fully integrated into national development programmes, it would hasten the actual rate of economic prosperity of the country—a growth rate so urgently needed in India by its multi-million people and which in turn will condition the extent to which India can expand her educational systems.

The importance of technology as a vital feature of Higher Education has been shown by

⁸ M.R.C. Mukherjee: *Underdevelopment and Educational Policy*.

your Minister for Industrial Development. Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, in the course of a speech delivered this last summer in London, said that since Indian Independence a new dimension had been added to the close economic links between Britain and India. United Kingdom investments increased from about Rs. 2,060 million in value in 1948 to a figure of Rs. 5,000 million in 1965, with a very much higher figure today. Britain's was the highest record in the flow of capital and technology to India. About 10% of Britain's bilateral aid (some £ 22 million in 1967) is spent on education and training and of that amount 80 to 90% goes to Commonwealth countries. The Minister indicated that modern India now had a strong and developed industrial economy resting on a broad and relatively stable agricultural base.

Mr. Ladislav Cerjek in his *Problems of Aid to Education in Developing Countries*, says this : "There is no need to stress the fact that even for the apex of the educational pyramid the formulas of Oxford, Sorbonne, Harvard or Heidelberg, are far from being the most appropriate."⁹

He considers that the West has other models more suitable and mentions the Land Grant Colleges which have made such a decisive

⁹ Ladislav Cerjek : *Problems of Aid to Education in Developing Countries*.

contribution to the expansion of agriculture in the United States. He mentions also the plan for a European University, put forward by Euratom in 1960. He also cites the Regional University Colleges, established in Chile. These are institutions providing two years study. These courses are designed to perfect the general education especially in the secondary school and to prepare for vocational or academic studies in the different faculties, to encourage scientific and technical research and to encourage short courses bound up with the economic and cultural life of the region.

I have mentioned agriculture. Unesco¹⁰ claims that over 90% of India's agricultural scientists are in the public sector. Rene Dumont draws attention to the danger that education shall become solely a means of access *to the privileged class of public officials*.

I cannot do better than give a quotation from your own expert, J.P. Naik, in *Educational Reconstruction in India*, where he says:¹¹ "It is now agreed that at the university stage the highest emphasis has to be on the improvement of quality."

He says that standards in collegiate and secondary education are tending to decline

¹⁰ *A Report on Planning Education for Economic Development*, Delhi, 1964.

¹¹ J.P. Naik: *Educational Planning in India*. New Delhi, Allied, 1965.

owing to rapid expansion. He concludes by stressing the need for quality in the post graduate stage. These views are broadly shared by Professor Shils.

All this points to the need for still greater effort in carrying out the findings of the Education Commission and indeed in interpreting the wishes of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Our problems in Britain are not dissimilar but they are not on so large a scale as yours. Higher Education is not only an important subject for a lecture, it is a gateway to the success of National Development.

PART II

FOR THE SECOND part of my lecture I would like to deal with Student Power, Adult Education, leading from that, the Open University, the idea of an Independent University, with my conclusion on Academic Liberty.

Student Power is a problem in any country in the world, it has perhaps attracted the widest attention in France, in California, in New York, in Harvard, in Japan, in Madrid, and to a certain extent in Bonn. You have had your own manifestations and we have had ours at the London School of Economics, in Essex, in Birmingham and in Bristol. But I would say without hesitation that in British universities today there are a majority of students who are either indifferent or prefer to see moderate courses prevail. Your own Commission on Education has commented on the need for constant contact between senior and junior members and it is precisely the absence of this which has usually

precipitated conflict.

At the Sorbonne the position was in fact out of date and in particular the students were suffering from overcrowding and lack of contact with their teachers. But there has been something deeper than this in the worst manifestations of student unrest. There has been a deep disillusionment on the part of the young with the society they see around them. When I spoke recently in the House of Lords I quoted Stephen Spender's world wide study of the young in revolt.¹² He claims that the young at the Sorbonne wished to "put idealism in power" This expressed their wish to create the world after their own image as against a world dominated by the politics of power and the production of things. Diana Trilling in an article on the Columbia students says that they call themselves existential. By this they mean to emphasise whatever in them heightens their consciousness of being persons, since they feel that they live in a society which denies personality. To them, as they say, the central value of living is life itself. Our experience as is yours in India is that participation is the key to solving student unrest.

We therefore see in western universities a rebellion against competition and the capitalist

¹² Stephen Spender : *The Year of the Young Rebels*, Wiedenfeld, 1969.

structure of individualised society. In India you have these manifestations but your canvas is broader and is not uniformly painted upon.

If student aspirations were confined to the ideals which I have described they would be easier to deal with. But the fact is that in almost every university in the west there is a small hard core of extremists who regard Marx and Mao as positively right wing! Apart from propagating their extreme views these groups very often set out to wreck the universities which nurture them. We are clear in our country that such wrecking attempts must be opposed and the discipline of the university imposed.

It is important that if discipline is to be manifested it should be seen to be fair. To this end the universities of Oxford and Cambridge are both setting up new courts with student membership and with the right to appeal. Nothing stirs the hornets' nest more than what they regard as unjust dismissal.

The situation in India has been described by Humayun Kabir in his book *Education in a New India*.¹³ He describes instances of grave indiscipline among students. "In some cases", he says, "things have gone so far that teachers in schools or invigilators in examinations have been attacked."

¹³ Humayun Kabir: *Education in a New India*. London, George Allen & Unwin, 1959.

One cause of this distress can be traced to the immaturity of the students, another to the inadequacy of the curriculum, a third to the absence of properly organised extracurricular activities. When I come to talk shortly about Adult Education I shall describe the opening there should be in this sphere for under-employed students.

When the fight for independence was on it was natural for the younger generation not only to be deeply interested but to become involved. Now the only relic of these exciting times is a general feeling of resistance to authority.

The interesting feature of student unrest is that it is more prevalent in faculties which are not "job orientated". There is, for example, less unrest in the professional schools and those of medicine and engineering. Here there is a definite relationship of training to later employment and the student gets a sense of direction and security. All this links up with the issue I raised as to whether education should be job orientated and attached to development prospects, or be an end in itself. Now that we are considering student unrest I have no doubt that the more practical the school the less likelihood there is of disquiet and unrest. For example the school of what is known as sociology—an inexact science—is an undoubted breeding ground for revolt.

Mr. Gunnar Myrdal in his classic work on Asia¹⁴ questions whether the unrest of the young derives from tension between the classes or the age groups. The reference to the classes raises the question whether in fact one of the features of what Myrdal describes as Tertiary Education is the prevalence of the upper castes in many of the Higher Institutions of learning.

Myrdal concludes in these sensible words : “More than lamentation is required : determined action to adapt the schools (within the universities) to the needs of youth and to keep them functioning in an orderly fashion”. He goes on to ask for the students’ time to be more fully occupied in study groups, library classes, education in literacy. He claims that student unrest is a manifestation of ills within the system of Higher Education and within society itself, and for these we of the older generation are certainly responsible.

Adult Education

I have just said that a field for activity and beneficial activity for the student is that of Adult Education. This in India is a territory of the utmost importance since by mentioning the very words one challenges the whole issue of Adult Literacy itself. In Britain we are so exercised about this question of Adult Educa-

¹⁴ Gunnar Myrdal : *Asian Drama*,

tion that we have set up a national enquiry. I have for many years been a Vice-President of the Workers Educational Association. This body has done wonderful work and adapted to its use the tutorial system, but alas the scope of WEA activities is infinitesimal compared with the need that still exists for their expansion.

Your Minister of Education, Dr. Rao, in describing how difficult it is to achieve the maximum result in India writes :

“This is not possible in the absence of adult literacy, a vast programme of book production in the regional languages and a reorientation of the educational system to serve the needs of the rural areas in terms of modernisation and the application of science and technology. In the absence of all this, what emerges is not the growth of self-reliance and mass involvement in development, but the emergence of an agitational approach to economic problems and the building up of an increasing reliance on government and governmental aid which is unhealthy.”

The fundamental aim of Adult Education must be to achieve something nearer approaching Adult Literacy than exists today. In 1961 the figure of literates among the grown-up population was only 24% . There was and has been a particular backwardness among the vast mass of rural women.

Dr. Rao pursues his well-known theme by postulating that literacy by itself is not enough and that it must be geared to socio-political and economic development. For this reason he feels that Adult Education should

be more functional than education in schools. He thinks that efforts to promote this kind of education in villages should be linked with efforts to improve food production, deal with pests and enlarge employment prospects. This means that Adult Education would have to be the concern of more than one ministry and this we are finding out to be the case in our explorations in Britain.

The Open University operating through the medium of air—that is to say broadcasting—may well be one which could have an appeal in India. The first objective would be a means of providing higher and further education for all those who for one reason or another could not partake of the benefits of an ordinary university or wished to continue their studies in a more informal way than could ordinarily be provided.

An Open University demands what may almost be described as a contract with a broadcasting network, and this may prove difficult. Such an organisation, if effective, is also a fine ally of adult education of which I have spoken and which is of such importance to India.

In Japan and Australia, in particular where there are problems of isolated and scattered communities, experiments have been made with “open” education. In Japan the Nippon Hoso Kyakai has established a correspondence high school of its own, working in partnership with senior High Schools. By 1967 some

17,000 students were enrolled, watching altogether some thirty-five hours of broadcasting time in a week. The broadcasting periods are reinforced by correspondence tuition. In Australia the University of New South Wales has set up a "Radio University" and its courses, notably in engineering, are supplemented by seminars at the university itself. Owing to the wide distances in Australia the radio content of these courses is made available also in tape recorded form so that it can be played back to small groups, in the event of the radio network not being adequate. This might be a device necessary to adopt in India.

In Europe the Munic "Telekolleg" illustrates the importance of using three types of teaching, by radio, by correspondence and face to face. In the United States Chicago, through its Board of Education, caters for a lower age group through its City Junior College. It is stated that for each broadcast course there is a range between 10 and 40,000 viewers.

As for Britain the Charter of our Open University has already been awarded, the Principal and Secretary chosen and appointed. Our Charter and students are much the same as that for any other university. Members of Council are nominated by the Privy Council, the BBC, and the Royal Society, and other members will represent what is described as the "University Sector" and the "Public Sector"

of Education. Power is given for co-option and for adjusting the flexibility of the administrative arrangements.

There will, of course, have to be a fresh look at educational methods. The basis of all good teaching is the personal relationship between teacher and taught. This was especially remarkable in the old Scottish system of the Dominie who set out from his wisdom to inspire his pupil for life. Such a contact will not, of course, be possible "on the air", though broadcast tutorial classes may be a help. It is interesting that the report of the Committee on University Teaching Methods, under Sir Edward Hale, which reported in 1964, claimed that the lecture or large group teaching method was still the principal mode of university teaching. But the question with the open university is how to supervise and enthrall a lonely homebased student. It is presumed that the new university will have to use fresh methods of communication, information and instructional analysis, there will have to be new learning sequences and routine assessments of progress. The University will have to have its own research unit, learning as it goes.

The proposals for degrees are more general than at a normal university. To this extent the normal acute specialisation which is the bane of our Higher Education would be broken

down. According to the number of credits a candidate gets, so will he qualify for an "ordinary" or an "honours" degree.

In short our Minister of Education has described this as one of the most important educational developments in recent years. The difficulties of distance and remoteness are greater in India than almost anywhere else. I nevertheless believe that this is an important imaginative development which will take root in most countries, indeed wherever the soul of man seeks to enlarge itself and to expand, and this applies to men and women of all ages and all tastes whether they desire training for an actual career or simply to widen and deepen their own usefulness as citizens.

Lastly, I intend to discuss academic freedom and in doing so I would like to mention what is called an Independent University, then I would like to discuss the role of the University Grants Committee in modern times.

There has been quite a determined move recently in Britain to start an Independent University: this means one which is not financed by State funds. The claim made by Professor Ferns of Birmingham, Professor Max Beloff and others, is that the gilt on the gingerbread of our 44 present universities is tarnishing. They use various derogatory arguments to show that the universities are tiring of the State and the State of the universities. They claim that a new institu-

tion is wanted which does not depend on public funds and which therefore *ipso facto* has more liberty. It is however clear that at least five million pounds would be necessary in capital to finance the new structure. The authors hope that there may be sources which would keep the complement of students, at about £1,500 a year each, happily enrolled at the university. Citation is made of 200,000 parents who keep boys at what we call Public Schools, and a hope expressed that such parents will face a continuation of their sacrifice and keep their young at the Independent University.

While I think everything is possible, and that one Independent University might well be established, I myself refused to sign the prospectus. I did this largely because I feel that it is a gross exaggeration to say that academic liberty is taken away from the average university due to dependence on State funds. I also feel that dependence on funds of Trusts and Private Industry may lead to just as much curtailment of liberty as if you form part of the normal state financed system. Great corporations are not going to give hundreds of thousands of pounds without following up with some active interest in how the money is spent. I have noticed at one university at home where we raised a big private sum to supplement the State grant, that we get more anxiety in pleasing our benefactors from the private sector

than we do in satisfying Local Education Authorities and the Public Department. I think that the financial arrangements, particularly for the financing of students, will be very hard to achieve and I think that the dependence on private corporations will lead to embarrassment. This has certainly been found to be the case in America, especially with research projects. What is more, in these days of Student Power, the students very often query ventures which depend on funds financed by private profit making enterprise. I do not believe that students who have managed to scrape together the money to provide their own further education will be any the less critical of existing adult enterprises than their opposite number in the State system. *Per contra* Private Industry will be more critical of Student Unrest than the existing authorities.

Professor Ferns of Birmingham in advocating the "Independent" idea is critical of the University Grants Committee in my country. But I really fail to see the justification for such criticism. You have a similar body in India and I regard these bodies as buffer states between the university and the Government of the day. Sir Walter Moberley said in 1948 that Mr. Dalton had said that the UGC should act as a buffer or shock absorber. This claim was repeated in our country by Lord Robbins and Mr. Quintin Hogg.

In discussing academic freedom the role of the UGC as a buffer “is invaluable since the impression is rightly created that the State’s funds are administered by an independent body”. This fact is, at one and the same time, an answer to those critics who fear State interference and an alternative to the Independent University, where, if funds come from Private Industry, there is no intermediate body like the UGC to guarantee impartiality.

Your University Grants Commission has been very successful under the able chairmanship of Dr. Kothari. With us the UGC has had a uniformly successful career, a visit from the UGC to a University is treated as almost a divine intervention. Everything is laid out on red carpets and obeisance is made. We have no reason to criticise the extraordinary latitude given to the UGC to make grants. I have not known one university in South, East, West or North to criticise these grants. It is after all extremely tantalizing to note a vast new hall being erected elsewhere on UGC money and then to say very little. But so great is the respect for the UGC that their decisions over allocations are respected.

It has therefore, been all the more worrying that our Government has decided to allow the Comptroller and Auditor General to investigate university accounts. I regard this as an inroad into academic liberty, but it is explained in my

country as being justified by the fact that no less than £200 million is spent on the universities and the taxpayer must have some explanation as to how this sum is expended.

It would, in my view, be disastrous if the Comptroller questioned UGC grants or if he attempted to differentiate between the amounts spent in one university or other on research. It is not so much that I mind his personal observations, I fear his responsibility to the Public Accounts Committee and so directly to Parliament. If grants are to be discussed in Parliament then there will be locally based rivalry between universities and that will lead to a friction which has so far been avoided under the benign rule of the UGC. Thus far we are consulted by the Comptroller who says that he has no sinister intentions, and I personally am comforted by the fact that he is a Trinity man! However, this question of audit is a major one which should be watched with great suspicion by all universities.

Meanwhile the UGC in my country needs watching because inexorably it is moving away from being a buffer, which is a comfortable and elastic object, to being very often a locomotive or driving force in one direction or another. One has only to read our UGC report for 1967-68 to see how this is happening.

When I was Chancellor of the Exchequer the universities were under me. I was too busy

to interfere and so this typical ruse of the British constitution operated to keep the universities under the UGC. Now, not only is the UGC becoming more mandatory, but the universities are under the Department of Education and Science. Only the other day I was consulting the Chairman of the UGC and he told me that he must ascertain the views of the Department.

Let us now examine whether universities are right to fear encroachment on academic freedom from the latest powers which are being assumed by our Grants Committee. In Paragraph 564 of their latest report the Committee states :

“In short we are now inescapably involved in making positive judgements, an activity which goes far beyond the capacity of a buffer or a shock-absorber. The sheer number of universities, their decreasing homogeneity and the correspondingly increased variety of their offerings demand some central appraisal, if unnecessary duplication is to be avoided.”

They say later :

“On the one hand if each university does that which is right in its own eyes with no regard for the totality of university provision or the national needs, there is a clear danger that anarchy and licence, under the universally respected name of academic freedom, will result.”¹⁵

I am talking to you today on academic

¹⁵University Grants Committee, *Annual Survey, Academic Year, 1967-68*, Cmnd. January 1969. See also Chapter III (“Universities and the Public Purse”) of G.F. Kneller, *Higher Learning in Britain* (University of California Press, 1955).

freedom. I have taken into account these statements and I recommend to you and your universities the operation in its new form of more than a "buffer" that is our system of the University Grants Committee. Its operation should as it says avoid licence and encourage freedom.

I have covered a broad field in this lecture. I have tried to show how important Education is to developing countries. I have recommended that universities will preserve their character and their independence both by mixing in the day to day world. I have given my view that the more higher education courses are job-orientated the less there is of student unrest. After discussing Adult Education, the Open and Independent University, I have concluded that university freedom is best maintained by keeping the universities at one remove from the government. It now only remains for me to hand you the password of academic liberty and to wish you well.

